

Story 919 (1964 Tape
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jinn *Thapant*
The Poor Boy, the Of-f-f-f Demon,¹ and the Trade Not Found On Earth

Back in the time of padişahs there was a poor boy who one day said to his father, "I want to marry the daughter of the padişah."

"How could that ever happen? The padişah would never give his daughter to us.

"Well, let us go to the palace and ask him just once anyway. If he does not consent to give us his daughter, then I will put the whole idea out of my mind."

That was a time when padişahs and kings were absolute rulers. They could do anything they wished with people, and so the poor man went to the palace filled with fear, not knowing how the padişah might respond to his request. He stood before the palace for two or three days waiting for the guards to admit him. Finally the padişah, sitting by a window,

¹Whatever noise other people may make when they sigh with fatigue or exhale in exhaustion, Turkish people go "Of-f-f-f-f!" In English this sound would more phonetically be reproduced with the spelling "Uf-f-f-f!" Making this noise may have the result of calling up a jinn or demon of that name, the "Of-f-f-f Jinn," or the "Of-f-f-f Demon." This supernatural creature is sometimes benevolent, sometimes malevolent.

Story 919

observed him himself and ordered his attendants to admit the man to his presence. "What is it that you want?" he asked the poor man

"Your Majesty, I am afraid to explain my wish, but I must do it somehow.

"Well, let us hear it," said the padişah

"Your Majesty, I have a son who is old enough to be married, and he wants to marry your daughter."

to + 6 The padişah thought about this request for a few minutes and then he said, "Tell him he may have her if he can meet one condition."

"And what is that condition, Your Majesty."

"I shall give him my daughter in marriage if he can learn a trade that is not to be found in this world

"All right, Your Majesty. I shall explain this condition to him, and if he thinks he can meet it, let him try to do so

Returning home, the poor man explained to his son the result of his request of the padişah. "The padişah says that he will give you his daughter in marriage if you can learn a trade not to be found in this world."

"All right, Father, I shall try to discover and then learn such a trade.

But his father said, "My son, you are still too young to go alone on such a hazardous journey. I shall travel with

Story 919

you." Taking some money and a small supply of food, the man and his son set out in search of a trade about which they knew nothing.

One day as the father and son were traveling along, they grew very weary, and they decided to rest for a while. They were in a forest at that time, a strange and rocky place that was not at all attractive.

out his breath in a tired way,

said, "I have come!"

"But I did not call you or anyone else," said the father. "I just went "Of-f-f-f-f!"

"Well, my name is Of-f-f-f. Why did you come here?"

"My son decided that he wanted to marry the daughter of the padişah. When I went to the palace to ask for the hand of this girl, the padişah said that he would give her to my son on the condition that he could first learn a trade that cannot be found in this world. We do not know what that trade is or where to find it, but we are traveling in search of it anyway."

"My specialty is trades not to be found practiced on the earth. I can teach your son such a trade, if you wish. We can set a date for you to return and get your son, and in the meantime, he can learn that trade. If you will return in

Story 919

forty days, I think that I shall have been able to teach him the trade by that time." The father agreed with this arrangement and went home.

When the father had gone, the demon pulled the boy into his cave among the rocks where he and his daughter lived. This Of-f-f-f Demon had the ability to turn himself into many different shapes. He could become a bird, a giant, a monster, or almost anything else he wished. He told his daughter to teach the young man the secrets of their trade, and the following day, after the old man had left the cave, the instruction began. After a month of such instruction, the girl had taught him everything that he would ever need to know, but she warned him, "If my father asks you if you have learned all the secrets and tricks of his trade, don't ever admit that you have done so. Even though he agreed to have these taught to you, he is really very jealous of his trade. If he discovers that you have mastered it, he will kill you."

The young man had learned many strange practices from the girl. He accepted the girl's advice, however, and decided to tell the old man that he had not been able to learn anything under his daughter's instruction.

When the appointed day arrived the young man's father returned to the cave for him. "Did you teach my son a trade that cannot be found in this world?"

Story 919

"No, he is too stupid to learn anything. Here, take these 10,000 liras in compensation for my failure to teach your son a trade."

father took his son and the two departed. On the way home they came upon a broad plain and saw in the distance a large flock of sheep grazing. As they walked toward this flock, the young man said, "Father, I really learned enough unusual practices in the cave of the Of-f-f-f Demon to constitute several trades not found in this world. I shall show you some of the tricks that I learned, and we shall make a great fortune from them

"Very well. Let us see some of them. I thought that you had learned nothing. That is what your teacher said."

Now that they were close to the flock of sheep, the son said, "I am now going to become a ram. After I have done so, you will sell me to these shepherds for a good price."

As the old man and his ram approached the shepherds, who were sitting on the ground eating bread and cheese, one of the shepherds asked, "Will you sell us that ram, Uncle?" They had never before seen a ram that looked like this one.

"Yes, if you will pay me what it is worth."

The ram was sold for three times the price of an ordinary ram at that time. The father took the money and left, but as soon as he had gone out of sight down the road, the ram

Transformation

Story 919

disappeared too. The young man was soon walking alongside his father again.

As they approached a town, the boy said to his father, "I shall now become a horse, and you can sell me in this town for a high price." Saying this, the young man transformed himself into a horse, a horse so beautiful that no one had seen its likes before. When the old man led it through the city to the marketplace, that magnificent horse reared up on its back legs. Everyone stared at it in amazement.

It happened that the Of-f-f-f Demon was also in the marketplace that day, and he recognized the horse at once. "That must be the young man instructed by us, and that old man must be his father," he said to himself. "I can see now that my daughter betrayed me. She said that she had not been able to teach him anything, but it is quite clear that she taught him much. I must buy this horse at any price, for I do not want to have my trade taken into the world." The Of-f-f-f Demon bought the horse for ten times its market value. He then mounted it and rode it to his cave. There he called to his daughter, "Bring me my sword!"

When the girl looked at the horse, she too recognized at once that it was the young man she had instructed. She hid her father's sword and pretended that she could not find it.

"Bring me my axe, then," the Of-f-f-f Demon said.

Story 919

The girl hid the axe too. She continued to hide whatever weapon her father called for, saying each time, "I can't find it."

Then her father said, "Come here and hold this horse while I search for something suitable

Transformation
While her father was searching for a weapon with which to kill the horse, the girl slipped the bridle from the horse's head, and it became a bird and flew away.

When her father returned, he asked, "Where is the horse?"

"It turned into a bird and flew away."

As soon as the father heard this, he changed himself into a falcon, a bird that can fly faster than any other bird. The falcon at once began to pursue the smaller bird, but that bird had such a great head start that it took some time to catch up with it. The young man finally reached his own land and entered the palace through an open window. Unable to get through the window, the falcon resumed its human shape and waited by the palace gate

When the young man entered the palace, he had changed into a rosebud on the breast of the padişah's daughter. Through his magical powers, the Of-f-f-f Demon knew this. When this demon was finally able to gain admission to the padişah's presence, he said to the ruler, "Your Majesty, your daughter has a rosebud on her left breast, and I should like very much

Story 919

to take a look at that rosebud."

The padişah was very surprised to hear this and responded at once, "No, my daughter has no such thing on her breast."

"Yes, she has, Your Majesty. It was placed there just very recently."

To satisfy his own curiosity, the padişah asked his daughter to come into his presence. He, the Of-f-f-f Demon, and the girl all sat around a small table. When the padişah had his daughter bare her breast, there was a rosebud close to her left shoulder.

The Of-f-f-f Demon recognized at once that the rosebud was the young man, and he reached in an attempt to seize him. Before he could do so, however, the rosebud turned into seven grains of wheat. The Of-f-f-f Demon then changed into a cock and began to peck up the grains of wheat. There was soon just one grain of wheat left on the floor, for the cock had eaten the other six. Before he could eat that last grain, it turned into a fox which quickly caught the cock and bit through its throat, killing it.

Throughout the time that this was going on, the padişah had pulled himself aside and was watching the whole spectacle as if it had been a film.²

²This extreme anachronism occurs not within the action of the tale but in the commentary on the action made by the narrator

Story 919

The fox then changed into the young man, who then said to the padişah, "This is the trade I have learned--a trade found in this world. I have learned how to change myself into a great variety of forms

Greatly impressed by the young man's performance, the padişah said, "You may now marry my daughter." He arranged a wedding for them that lasted for forty days and forty nights, after that the couple lived happily together for the rest of their lives.